DR. GAVIN PERRY

DR. PERRY: I'm Dr. Gavin Perry. I work at Washington University School of Medicine and I live in Webster Groves. I live less than half a mile from the Union Pacific and other railroad lines, and in Webster you can hear trains going by from just about anywhere in Webster Groves.

1 Studies have been done since the early '60s, and I cite one of them, on how to deal with these high-level wastes that have been generated by the nuclear power industry. We fought against building these plants for over 20 years. You built them anyway. Now we have to deal with permanent storage of material that should never have been produced in the first place. St. Louis is still dealing with the waste of the Manhattan Project, the original nuclear bomb program, so we know that these solutions are not simple.

2 These problems of generating high-level, long-lived radioactive materials as well as potential problems from nuclear accidents, weapons proliferation and other costs in dollars and lives of the complete cycle from mining to disposal have created the most expensive electricity ever. We used it long ago, but we will be paying for it forever. The natives of this land talked about protecting the land for seven generations. The nuclear program has generated a problem which will haunt not just the next seven generations or the next 700, but the next 7,000 generations, should humans even survive that long.

3.... Given that wonderful history of the commercial nuclear program, I would like to focus now on the local problem of transporting high-level wastes through metropolitan areas. All high-level waste casks, I think, should be moved by rail exclusively. This is assuming it has to be taken somewhere. I don't think it's a good solution to just leave it at 72 sites around the country. I would agree with thoughts on that, but it cannot be done by trucking. Trucking casks in the metropolitan areas is worse. They will need to build railroad spurs to all plants and avoid trucking even for loading casks and having these transfer stations which would be vulnerable to accidents and excess routine exposures. Does anyone remember SLAPS, where Latty Avenue is or the Hazelwood site, transfer stations for the Manhattan Project that we're still cleaning up today?

3 cont. DOE should build their own secure track around metropolitan areas. Preferably, all shipments should be on secure, monitored rail lines and not mixed with commercial traffic. There are at least three reasons that the high-level radioactive waste should not be transported through cities. That's all I'll cover is these three.

4 One is the routine exposure. Radioactive gases venting from the casks and gamma radiation penetrating shielding will cause routine exposure of 20 to 30 million REM per hour to people located near the track. Delays in and around major cities are likely, keeping the train in a city longer than anticipated on occasions, increasing planned routine exposures. I have a quote from a reference that's on the web. I'll just give you this, the reference by inclusion. The quote is, "Risk studies have shown that radiological effects of normal, routine shipments pose a greater health risk than that from an accident. Therefore, several factors are considered by the Department of Transportation in suggesting routing requirements for nuclear waste. People living along the transport route, passengers in cars traveling the same highway and truck drivers face exposure."

5 That's one, routine. Two, accidents will happen. Example, a coal train destroyed a house just the other day not far from here. Cleaning up two million pounds of coal is going to be bad enough, but cleaning up casks of radioactive waste, even if they weren't breached, will require specialized handling and consequent disruption in the vicinity -- I'm talking somebody's neighborhood here -- if there was an accident. Evacuation of a residential neighborhood or downtown area would be extremely disruptive, not to mention very expensive, so I just don't see any reason to have material in an area where if there were an accident, you would impact millions of people.

6 Third, which is just starting to be brought up now, and I was thinking about it last night, sabotage, hijacking and the possibility of absolutely controlling it, some of it surely passing through a densely populated area. I assume that they tested these casks by shooting bullets at them, but did they try uranium armor piercing weapons. It's not very had to get armor piercing shells anymore and I would think that one armor piercing Teflon-coated uranium shell would easily vent radioactive gases from the cask. An antitank missile which can be carried around by one person and launched from the shoulder would be a lot more dangerous and could damage the cask and contaminate an area forever.

MR. BROWN: If you can wrap things up.

DR. PERRY: I'm more than most of the way done. Obviously, no sane person would fire a weapon at a radioactive waste container, but unfortunately we do not live in a sane world. We were worried at the turn of the year about terrorists blowing up buildings in Seattle, the Space Needle and elsewhere. We're concerned about nuclear proliferation in North Korea and Iran and now you want to take the most dangerous materials known to man routinely through cities and suburbs -- I don't think so.

Here we are spending billions of dollars on Star Wars technology to keep missiles from being fired at us from somewhere else in the world, technology which we know will never work and which just failed its last test a couple days ago, and then we turn around and put the stuff right smack in the heart of the city for anyone who can handle a shoulder-launch antitank missile to blow it up and contaminate a large area. It just does not make sense. Keep the high-level waste, which never should have been produced in the
7 first place, well away from densely populated areas of the country. Let's stop making more and move to safe and renewable sources of energy as soon as possible. Thank you.